

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
PARKS, RECREATION AND BEACHES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
FIRE STATION # 2
528 NW 2ND STREET
WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2025 – 6:00 P.M.**

Cumulative Attendance

Board Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Alex Collazo, Vice Chair	P	6	0
Ruchel Coetzee	A	5	1
Vanessa Apotheker	P	2	2
Ronald Goff	P	4	0
Anna Vratsinas	A	2	1
Solomon Schoonover	A	3	3
Joy Oglesby, Chair	P	6	0
Idan Eckstein (Left at 6:48 P.M.)	P	4	2
Colette Keno	P	3	1
Marta Reczko	A	5	1
Sean Fee	P	3	0
Don Mizell (Arrived at 6:11 P.M.)	P	1	0

Oct 2024 - Sept 2025

As of this date, there are 12 appointed members to the Board, which means 7 would constitute a quorum. A quorum was present.

Staff

Carl Williams – *Director of Parks and Recreation*
Leana Suarez – *Senior Administrative Assistant*
Patricia SaintVil-Joseph – *Assistant City Attorney*
Alex Torres – *Senior Project Manager of Parks and Recreation*
Todd Stilphen – *Community Program Manager*

Others

N/A

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Oglesby led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the March 26, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Alex Collazo and seconded by Colette Keno, to approve the March 26, 2025, meeting minutes, as distributed. In a voice vote, the motion passed 7-0.

- Parks Bond - New Parks Approval Request (Alex Torres and Ben Rogers)**
(Floyd Hull, Cliff Lake, Gore Betz Park, Marshall Point, Poinciana Park, Smoker Park, Snyder Park and Stranahan Park)

Senior Project Manager of Parks and Recreation Alex Torres introduced the

proposal to allocate \$1.1 million to begin the funding strategy for several parks, including Stranahan Park, Smoker Park, Cliff Lake Park, Poinciana Park, Snyder Park, Gore Betz Park, and Marshall Point Park. Mr. Torres explained reallocating funds from the Fort Lauderdale Beach project would enable these projects to move forward while awaiting further bond funding.

Vice Chair Collazo asked whether all the parks listed were originally part of the bond master plan. Mr. Torres confirmed they were, clarifying these parks were part of the third phase and had not yet been formally presented to the board for funding approval.

Board members discussed the rationale for reallocating funds from the Fort Lauderdale Beach project, which had been delayed due to permitting issues. Mr. Torres emphasized the importance of utilizing available funds for projects ready to proceed rather than allowing them to remain unspent.

Vice Chair Collazo expressed concern about whether the proposed funding strategy could inadvertently slow down other priority projects. Mr. Torres clarified the proposed reallocation would expedite project initiation without negatively affecting the current funding pipeline.

Mr. Goff supported the reallocation, stating the community needed to see progress, especially with longstanding plans. He noted many residents had been anticipating updates on these parks for years.

Ms. Apotheker expressed support but cautioned that reallocating funds could lead to community concerns about project prioritization. Mr. Torres reassured the Board that public input had been considered in prioritizing these projects.

Director of Parks and Recreation Carl Williams added the City Commission had shown support for prioritizing projects already underway. Board members agreed reallocating unused funds was preferable to leaving them unspent for extended periods.

Acting Assistant City Manager Ben Rogers, stated staff had been providing a citywide report of all parks bond projects to the City Commission by the 15th of each month. The report included status updates by district, outlining responsibilities, pending items, and feedback needed from permitting agencies, stakeholders, or community meetings. The report was approximately 15 pages and included timelines and progress for each project.

Motion was made by Idan Eckstein and seconded by Alex Collazo, to approve the allocation of \$1.1 million funds to begin the funding strategy for Stranahan Park, Smoker Park, Cliff Lakes Park, Poinciana Park, Snyder Park, Gore Betz Park, Marshall's Point Park. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 7-0. Mr. Mizell abstained.

Motion was made by made by Colette Keno and seconded by Idan Eckstein, to move \$415K from Hortt Park to Floyd Hull Park. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 7-0. Mr. Mizell abstained.

Following the vote, Mr. Mizell introduced himself to the Board.

2. Sponsorship (Carl Williams)

Director of Parks and Recreation Carl Williams outlined the proposal to establish standardized hospitality areas at key city events. He described three options, each offering varying levels of food, beverage, and alcohol provisions. Mr. Williams noted City Commission feedback emphasized maintaining non-alcoholic funding while allowing for sponsored cash bars.

The Board discussed whether outsourcing event sponsorship procurement to external vendors would be beneficial. Mr. Williams explained that while the city currently relies on internal staff to secure sponsorships, there was interest in hiring an external agency that could more proactively secure funding. Mr. Williams clarified that the proposed model would involve paying vendors a percentage of the sponsorship revenue rather than a flat fee.

Vice Chair Collazo expressed caution about relying on third-party companies, suggesting the city maintain some control to ensure sponsor appropriateness and community alignment.

Mr. Williams explained that the City Commission had already approved moving forward with a streamlined process for securing sponsorships under \$50,000. For larger multi-year agreements, the Board would still provide recommendations before final approval.

Mr. Williams described the city's revised sponsorship process, designed to streamline event planning and improve sponsorship acquisition. He noted the previous process was time-consuming, often resulting in short lead times for event promotion.

Ms. Apotheker raised concerns about the optics of using public funds for alcoholic beverages. Several board members agreed hospitality areas were valuable for engaging community partners, but alcohol should be funded by sponsors rather than city funds.

Motion was made by Colette Keno and seconded by Alex Collazo, to approve hospitality areas at signature events with finger foods, nonalcoholic beverages, and a cash bar, with a budget of \$1,000 per activation.

It was suggested building flexibility into the plan to accommodate different event sizes and themes. Mr. Williams acknowledged the need for adaptable budgeting, indicating some events might warrant more robust offerings than others.

Ms. Keno rescinded her motion.

Discussion continued about alcoholic beverages and funding.

Chair Oglesby passed the gavel to Vice Chair Collazo.

Motion was made by Joy Oglesby and seconded by Sean Fee, to approve the hospitality area experience with the option for the city to allocate up to \$1,500 per activation for the selection of food, assorted non beverages and having a sponsor for a cash bar. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 8-0.

Motion was made by Vanessa Apotheker and seconded by Alex Collazo, approve the recommended signature events, 4th of July, New Years Eve Downtown Countdown, Sistrunk Parade and Festival, Summer Jamz, Saint Patrick's Day to include a hospitality area. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 8-0.

3. **New Business**

Mr. Williams provided an update on proposed beach enhancements and the discussion regarding converting existing basketball courts to pickleball courts near a new condominium development.

Mr. Fee expressed concerns about losing the basketball courts, emphasizing their cultural and historical significance to the community.

Vice Chair Collazo proposed drafting a formal communication to the City Commission opposing the conversion, emphasizing the importance of preserving public basketball courts. There was consensus.

4. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 P.M.

[Minutes prepared by TBaclawski, Prototype-Inc.]